

INTRODUCTION

Preparation is the key to effectively handling any crisis situation. The information, resources, and lessons learned included in this package should be thoroughly reviewed and your crisis team and plan established prior to a crisis occurring. You and your spouse should discuss expectations of each other during a crisis.

As a leader, you should be familiar with the key individuals in the community — the directors of the Family Support Center, Red Cross, Relief Societies — with whom you will be working during a crisis. If these steps are taken in advance, you will be much better prepared should a crisis occur, and your contributions and support will be invaluable to military families during a crisis.

CRISIS RESPONSE OVERVIEW

This information has been collected from a variety of sources including previous crisis response workshops.

Most leadership spouses are provided with minimal resources to perform tasks necessary during a crisis. This guide is designed to:

- Provide insight into working with crisis calls.
- Reduce time needed to research and match individual needs to resources.
- Ensure referrals are made to the appropriate helping resources the first time.
- Function as a working tool for spouse.

Your support and assistance during a crisis can enhance the welfare of the command's family members.

Definitions of terms in this section:

Crisis – A crucial point or situation in the course of anything where abrupt or decisive change is impending.

Critical Incident – Any event that produces a response that overwhelms a person's or group's ability to cope.

Casualty – Any service member who is critically ill, injured, missing, or deceased.

CRISIS INTERVENTION

Understanding a Crisis

When the stress of life events becomes overwhelming and we are unable to find a way out of our predicament, a crisis will occur. At this time, a person can feel a sense of:

- bewilderment
- danger
- confusion
- impasse
- desperation
- discomfort
- apathy
- helplessness
- urgency

Crisis intervention is a short-term helping process, focusing on resolution of the immediate problem through use of personal, social, and environmental resources.

The person in crisis needs information and referral to help themselves — don't do it for them. If they need the phone number to social services, give them the number — don't make the call for them. Calling for them only encourages their dependence on you as a helper and does nothing to build their self confidence or problem-solving skills.

Remember that no matter what the severity of the crisis, the caller:

- is experiencing real pain/stress
- is calling now because some definable event has occurred
- may be upset, angry, confused, or irrational
- has a preconceived idea of how you can help him

The Angry, Anxious, or Upset Caller

People in crisis often exhibit anger or anxiety, or may seem upset with you for no reason. This means that the caller may shout at you, use vulgarity, or even make you feel responsible for their crisis. Don't feed off of their emotional display! (For example, don't respond to a horrifying situation by saying "Oh, my God!") The best way to defuse a situation like this is to remain calm and non-judgmental in your response. In fact, keep your voice soft. The caller will have to concentrate harder on listening to you and less on being angry. Keeping your voice soft will also have calming effect on the caller. Be firm. Let the caller know that you want to help him. After all, that's why he called in the first place.

In times of crisis, people don't always know how to ask for the help they need or may feel embarrassed by asking for help. Anger may be masking either of these cases. Be sensitive to "where the caller is coming from" emotionally.

If the caller truly does not know how to ask for help, they may be hysterical — crying, apologizing, talking all around the problem. You will have to "pull" pieces of information from them in order to determine the problem and provide assistance. You'll need to proceed with tact and empathy.

An angry caller may be able to verbalize their problems and feelings, but their anger may block their ability to work with you. The angry caller may be aggressive and have preconceived ideas about how you can help him. Often, these are not necessarily the best solutions to his problems. So when you suggest alternatives or resources, the angry caller may not be receptive to your help. In that case, you need to set limits on how much longer you will allow that caller to use your time. Take control of the situation by:

- asking the caller what help he wants from you
- repeating your suggestions/resources once more
- and if he is still not satisfied, letting him know you have given him all the assistance you have available, and terminate the call by asking him to call back if he requires additional assistance.

You as a Helper

A crisis can be intensified by the feeling that the situation can't change. Your goal is to get the person to see the alternatives and possibilities for change. So don't give advice. Raise alternatives in the form of information and referral. At the same time, be realistic in your responses; don't offer false hope.

Your response to someone in crisis is important! You need to be:

- calm
- strong
- interested
- non-critical
- reassuring
- patient
- accepting
- non-judgmental

Establish a caring relationship. Be aware of:

- your tone of voice — does it show interest or boredom?
- how you comment or respond to what is being said — express yourself with care and concern, be non-critical.
- a sense of feeling in everything you say — express empathy, not sympathy.

Empathy, the key to helping, is being sensitive to the other person's hurt or any of their feelings; sympathy is pity.

Crisis Intervention Basics

Listen! Let the person involved speak.

Ten Commandments for Good Listening:

1. Stop talking.
2. Put the caller at ease. Establish a permissive environment.
3. Show the caller you want to listen. Sound interested.
4. Remove distractions.
5. Empathize with the caller.
6. Be patient. Don't interrupt.
7. Hold your temper.
8. Don't argue or criticize — it puts the caller on the defensive and he may "clam up."
9. Ask questions and take notes.
10. Stop talking, first and last. You can't be a good listener while you're talking.
 - Verbalize what you hear and what you see happening descriptively, not critically.
 - Work with the person who has asked for your help. You may find yourself assisting other "helpers."
 - Don't assume responsibility for the person's problem. Allow the person to become responsible for him/herself.
 - Try not to use historical excuses or axioms; that's a dead end.
 - When providing referrals, be specific. Tell them where to go, what time to be there, and whom to see.
 - Give reassurance and hope that the problem is solvable, but be realistic.
 - Earn the person's trust by acting responsibly and protecting their confidentiality.

Tending — The Art of Active Listening

Tips for Tenders

- Don't agree or disagree.
- Remember what the subject is.
- Don't be afraid of moments of silence.
- Don't talk about yourself.
- Summarize what you hear.
- Don't be afraid to interrupt when necessary.
- Don't ask "why" questions.
- Don't offer solutions or give advice.

Good Tending Questions

- "I hear you saying that..."
- "What happened then?"
- "What kinds of things do you mean?" "Can you expand on that?"
- "Wait, I don't understand."
- "Yeah, it sounds like..."
- "Let's get back to what you were saying about..."
- "I sense you feel pretty strongly about that."
- "Is that important to you?"
- "I'm not sure if I am following you."

Bad Tending Questions

- "Why do you feel that way?"
- "What can you do to improve your situation?" "Have you tried...?"
- "Are you sure you really think that way?" "Don't you want to be different?"
- "Do you want to know what I think?"
- "Can you figure out why you got that way?"
- "What are you going to do about it now?"
- "What's your problem?"

Understanding the Caller's Situation

To be certain that you understand the caller's feelings and experiences, use reflective listening. Once the caller has explained his situation, reflect (paraphrase) to him the situation as you understand it.

If the caller has multiple problems, you may have to help him prioritize the situations. Be sure to ask which he would like to work on first.

Use “good tending questions.” In addition to those previously listed, other questions that are useful when you are having some difficulty in perceiving the situation clearly, or when the caller might not be receptive to your responses, might include:

“I wonder if...?”

“I'm not sure if I'm with you, but...”

“Correct me if I'm wrong, but...”

“Is it possible that...?”

“From where I stand...”

“This is what I think I hear you saying...”

“I somehow sense that maybe you feel...”

“Do you feel a little...?”

“I'm not certain I understand; you're feeling...?”

“Let me see if I'm with you; you...”

Remember, asking why or how a person let themselves get into a situation gives the caller a message of disapproval.

Values Clarification

There is no way to overemphasize the importance of a non-judgmental attitude. This means we try to keep our own values and attitudes out of the interaction with the caller as much as possible. Often, callers will be discussing issues that we feel very strongly about—issues like abortion, death, suicide, drug use, and family matters. When we are in a helping situation, we are most effective when we keep these values to ourselves. Regardless of the morality or the ethics of transmitting our own values over the phone, one fact is very clear: judgmental listeners are ineffective listeners!

It is easy to avoid direct judgmental statements. But it requires special effort to avoid implying judgment. We can imply judgments unintentionally by our voice tone, by reactions of shock or horror, by attempts to subtly talk a caller out of a course of action that is inconsistent with your own values. Be aware at all times of how you sound and what you are saying.

Sometimes, however, things don't go smoothly. We naturally have strong feelings about issues we think are important. There are several ways that this can cause problems for us and for the caller.

- We begin to dislike the caller.
- We push the caller toward the solution we prefer.
- We internally ridicule the caller.
- We feel morally obliged to discourage the caller's behavior.
- We lose empathy because we cannot understand, let alone accept the situation.

When values become obstacles between you and the caller, it often means that you are not using reflective listening. Reflection can be especially helpful in bridging a gap in values. It provides a way to help someone without compromising your own beliefs, since it requires no personal judgments. You are merely reflecting the caller's feelings. **By focusing only on the caller, reflective listening keeps your values out of the caller's feelings. Even if you personally can't accept the caller's behavior, let the caller know you do accept their feelings and perceptions.**

Taking Care of Yourself

Beware of burnout! Helping in times of crisis, in addition to working at a hectic pace, can cause stress and lead to burnout. Some of the signs of burnout you might experience are:

- physical exhaustion
- mental “wipe out”
- argumentiveness/irritability
- loss of objectivity (becoming emotionally involved with callers)
- loss of accuracy
- inability to follow procedures

To avoid burnout

- Take breaks as often as you need them.
- Practice on-the-job relaxation techniques such as meditation or breathing exercises.
- Maintain personal routines, when possible (three meals, eight hours sleep, etc.), even if your days and nights are mixed up.
- Don't try to do it all — you can't! Enlist the help of family, friends, and neighbors to maintain your family (baby-sitting, cooking, carpools, etc.)
- Take care of others by ensuring they follow these suggestions.

Remember, you're no help to anyone, if you're suffering from burnout.

GENERAL INFORMATION ON EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

This information is intended to answer questions or concerns you may have in the handling of emergencies. We prepare ourselves for the worst and pray for the best. Most of the following information is based on past experiences.

General Information

It is important for you to make arrangements in advance with neighbors or someone nearby to assume care of your children if you are called on short notice. You may want to arrange a rotating schedule with another responsible person in the command. This makes it easier to contact you should an emergency occur.

Up-to-date Rosters

Prior to deployment, it is suggested that the CO/XO spouse have a copy of an up-to-date roster of both enlisted and officer personnel. This is only a suggestion, it will be up to the CO to decide to allow her to have the roster. This roster or locator should include the service member's name, rank/rate, spouse's name, present address, permanent cruise address and local address, and contact phone for both places. This roster would be closely held and used for emergencies only. It is vital that these rosters be kept current. It is imperative to have the current address and phone number of any spouse who moved away during deployment or who goes on an extended vacation.

Emergency Data Forms (EDFs)

All deployable personnel should have an EDF on file. EDFs provide detailed instructions in the event of a mishap involving the member and/or spouse as applicable.

Emergency Messages

Emergency messages going to the ship are normally delivered to the ship's Chaplain or directly to the CO. Then, it is relayed to the service member involved. This allows the service member to have someone with him/her when he/she receives the emergency message and also keeps the Skipper informed.

Red Cross: If a severe crisis occurs that requires the presence of a service member at home, on American Red Cross verification of the emergency may be desired (not required) before any emergency leave is granted. It is important to note, however, that emergency leave is always the Commanding Officer's informed decision.

Emergency Leave

Operational situations permitting, emergency leave will normally be granted in the following circumstances:

- When the return of the service member will contribute to the welfare of a dying member of his/her immediate family. The immediate family includes: father, mother, brother, sister, spouse, children, loco parentis (must be listed on page 2), or the only living relative.
- Upon the death of a member of the service member's immediate family (as defined above).
- When an accident, or serious illness of a member of the service member's family results in a serious family problem and imposes important responsibilities on him/her which must be met individually and which cannot be anticipated by his/her duty station or by any other individual or means.
- When failure of the service member to return home would create a severe and unusual hardship on either the member or the family.

Note: The guidelines for granting emergency leave are specific. Situations that may be considered an "emergency" by a family member or friend in actuality may not qualify at all.

ELIZABETH KUBLER ROSS — THE GRIEVING CYCLE

HELPING SPOUSES UNDERSTAND THE GRIEVING CYCLE

Feelings of shock, guilt, fear, and anger are the most common reactions to news of an accident. At the same time, many will feel both thankfulness that their spouse is alive and guilt that someone else died.

Grief manifests itself in various ways which may **include**: anger feelings toward the CO, the Navy/Marine Corps, their spouses, the way they found out about the news, etc. If someone is unreasonably angry at you, as spouse, it helps to remember that they are dealing with grief, a very powerful emotion.

Although technically termed “stages of grief,” it helps to remember that grieving does not necessarily move on a continuum through the stages. People may bounce back and forth between emotions.

We are always struck by feelings of inadequacy during times of grief. We want to say the right words to take away the pain, but know we can't. This may lead people to avoid a situation in which they feel inadequate:

- We can't “fix it,” but we can listen.
- We can't take away the pain, but we can share it.
- We will never be able to find exactly the right words, but we can “be there” and show our love.
- It helps to share memories, so don't be afraid to mention the deceased. You will not suddenly make them remember their loss.
- Don't be afraid of their tears or yours; they are healing.

The hardest time for the widow(er) begins after the shock wears off, the families leave, and the rest of the community goes on with its busy life. As we get involved in our own lives, we tend to feel guilt because we're busy and don't have “time” to visit, and guilt tends to make us stay away from the widow(er), which tends to make us feel even more guilty! A vicious circle! Usually they will welcome you at any time, and this will lessen the feeling of being “dropped.”

TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF. Your responsibilities will be great, but you, too, will need time to gather your thoughts and grieve. Don't minimize the fact that this has been a real ordeal for you. Find your support group, too... another who has gone through the same thing, your minister, or a close friend. Every Navy spouse who has ever gone through this knows the tough time you've had, and they are more than willing to lend a shoulder when it is needed.

The Five Stages of Grieving

In her book, *On Death and Dying*, Elizabeth Kubler Ross identifies five separate stages of grieving. The following information is meant to make you aware of these stages, to recognize them, and to know that they are a normal response to any traumatic situation. Not everyone experiences all of the stages. Sometimes they are experienced out of sequence. If someone remains stuck in one of the five stages, it may be a signal that professional intervention is needed.

Shock/denial

Anger/guilt

Despair

Depression

Acceptance/resolution

RESPONSIBLE MEDIA RELATIONS AND YOU

The media play an important role in communicating the military story not only to the civilian community, but to the military family as well. Most media personnel are interested primarily in gathering the facts and conveying the story in a balanced, fair manner. Many don't understand what it means to be in the military and may need help understanding the difficulties associated with being a military spouse.

Any member of the military family — active duty, reserve, civilian employees, and the family members of each — can communicate with the media at any time. Prior to doing so, however, they should be aware of certain guidelines to which they must conform, and be fully aware of the ramifications of going directly to the press.

Because of the nature of service in the military, care must be exercised when interacting with the media. Speaking with the media is permissible as long as:

- No classified matters are discussed
- Privacy Act information about other people is not discussed
- The subject of the interview is not a matter under investigation (e.g., a criminal or safety investigation)
- The nature of the discussion would endanger or compromise the safety of you, your loved ones, and friends (discussion of a ship/squadron's deployment status could identify you as being alone — discussion of the nature of what your spouse's unit is doing could compromise their security)

There are other considerations that, while not mandatory, should be considered prior to agreeing to a media interview:

- Don't speculate on what may happen.
- Don't spread rumors.
- Remember that the information you provide may only be part of a bigger story. While you may only have a part of the information, your part may be the key to compromising the security of the operation.
- You should only talk about your own personal experiences and only the things about which you have first-hand knowledge.
- Please be considerate of the feelings of others. Even though the information you have may not be classified, its disclosure may further upset people who have already been through bad times.

Media Relations

YOU ARE UNDER NO OBLIGATION TO SPEAK TO THE MEDIA AT ANY TIME. The decision is yours, but there is assistance available to you through Public Affairs Office. Public affairs professionals can provide you with media training, tips for interviews, and liaison with the media.

Public Affairs Offices will not release your name, address, and phone number to the media without your permission. If a reporter tells you they got your name from a Public Affairs Office, they are misrepresenting themselves and should be referred back to your Public Affairs Officer. Any time you are contacted by a reporter about any subject, please contact the Public Affairs Officer.

Even with the open gate policies, members of the media are not allowed on military property, including base housing areas, unless they are escorted by a public affairs representative. If media appear at your on-base quarters, contact security, who will escort them off base.

The rules are different off base. Media could conceivably "house-sit" in front of your house without violating any laws (provided they stay on public property). If this is happening, contact the Public Affairs Office at the above numbers. A public affairs representative will be happy to give you guidance and advice, and can contact the media directly.

Releasable Information

A basic rule of thumb for speaking with the media is to talk about only those things that you know about. Just the facts, and not rumors. Even though a spouse is not an “official spokesperson,” the information you provide to the media will be of interest to not only other members of the military family, but also to the general public. As such, it is important that you do not release confidential information. Normally, the following information can be released:

NOTE: (This applies to service members. In the case of a personal casualty, next of kin notification must be ensured prior to release of information)

- Name
- Hometown
- Past/present duty stations
- Marital status
- Education level
- For POWs/MIAs: basic information on circumstances surrounding their status
- Rank/rate
- Date/place of induction
- Date of rank
- Date/place of birth
- Medals and decorations

Please note that some important items are NOT normally releasable:

- Social Security number
- Medical information
- Home address/phone number
- Spouse/family member’s names, addresses, phone number
- Performance evaluations
- Record of nonjudicial punishment
- Character of discharge

As mentioned earlier, most reporters will make every effort to be fair to everyone concerned when reporting a story. If you have a problem that you view is caused by the military, please try to work it internally instead of going directly to the media with “an axe to grind.” **The chain of command is the place to fix problems, but that’s not possible unless the chain is given the opportunity to fix it.**

Rumor Control

The tongue is capable of prying open more caskets, exposing more skeletons in the closet, and stirring up more scandalous dust than any other tool on earth.

1. **Identify sources by name.** If someone is determined to share information that is damaging or hurtful, request the source be specifically identified.
2. **Support evidence with fact.** Do not accept hearsay. Refuse to listen unless honest-to-goodness truth is being communicated. You can tell.
3. Ask the person, **“May I quote you?”** It’s remarkable how quickly this will stop them. Equally remarkable is the speed with which they can backpedal.
4. Openly admit, **“I don’t appreciate hearing that.”** This approach is only for the strong. It might drive a wedge between you and the guilty party, but it’s a sure way to stop rumors.

Rumors hurt people. They destroy unity. Let’s pull together as a Navy community. Let’s put an end to rumors, either by not spreading them or by refusing to hear them.

Written by Pat Pennell, NOWC

Taken from Swindoll, Chuck, Seasons of Life, “Rumors”, Muhnomah Press, 1983, pp. 105-107.

SPOUSE CRISIS RESPONSE CHECKLIST

After notification of an incident/crisis at the command, consider the following:

TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF FIRST

- Shower and dress comfortably.
- Notify your family and spouse's family of incident.
- Notify neighbors and close friends of incident.
- Identify your support system and contact them to assist you if necessary.
- If necessary, arrange childcare for your children.

CRISIS RESPONSE

- Begin a notebook or log to note all information gathered and disseminated.
 - Write down information word for word to ensure accuracy. Note time and date.
- Establish a point of contact at command.
 - Expectations for communications: who will call whom, how often, type of information to be shared, command's expectations of you. Enter in log.
- Have Emergency Data forms readily available.
- Ensure XO (or CO) spouse is notified and establish communication plan.
- Contact Ombudsman and establish plan for communication. Enter in log.
- Activate Emergency Call Tree upon CO's request.
- Any change of status of information should be disseminated immediately through ombudsman, call tree, and/or the Command Careline.
- Update Careline regularly even if there is no new info. Preferably, every hour immediately following crisis.
- Contact PAO for answering machine if needed. Review how they can assist you, family support group, and command.
- Work with command regarding immediate informational meetings for families and support group:
 - PAO: Assisting XO or CO's spouse and families in dealing with media
 - Chaplain and Fleet and Family Support Centers (FFSC):
 - Critical Incident Stress Debriefings
 - Information and Referral
 - Counseling
 - Other topics as identified by command
 - Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society
 - Red Cross
- Identify a command spouse to act as a Volunteer Coordinator (VC). VC will determine needs of families including food, child care, transportation and lodging.

Resources include:

 - FFSC Volunteer Coordinator (coordinates resources offered by both military and civilian community)
 - Command
- Contact CACO to determine if family/families would like visits from command personnel and spouses. If so, it is recommended that visits be made in pairs and in civilian attire.

- ___ Identify a primary point of contact with each family to facilitate future communications. Most families will NOT contact you for help no matter how often you encourage it. You or VC must make regular contact to insure their needs are met.
- ___ Contact command for details regarding Memorial Service/Funeral and reception. Post info on Careline and Call Tree and encourage attendance, especially if command is deployed.
- ___ Follow up with VC, command, and family regularly.
- ___ Remember, after the funeral, the difficult time for the family begins. Continue to contact them to let them know they are not forgotten. Ask if they need assistance with anything and be prepared to act on it.

Most importantly, take care of yourself. There will be a time when you will need a break to assimilate the situation.

IN GRIEF: PRESS ON

Tips for helping yourself and others to survive the loss of a loved one.

By Deborah Peterson Moncrief

Ways to Help a Friend

When a friend is hurting, use tact, timing and sensitivity in all that you do. Below are some “dos and don’ts” that may help.

DO

Invite disclosure: Say, “If you ever want to talk about this loss. I’m here.” When you “listen” to her tears, she will leave a little less sad because you have helped her release more of the grief.

Keep in touch: Don’t give up — remain available. Leave thoughtful messages on her answering machine. Remember your friend on holidays and anniversaries. It is never too late to send kind words via e-mail, fax or greeting cards. Acknowledge the loss/grief and include a special memory of the person who was lost.

Listen with your heart: Show empathy by truly trying to understand what the loss has meant. Be a safe person to talk to and allow her to tell her story as many times as needed. Accept her silence and tears.

Do what needs to be done: Answer the phone; help make difficult phone calls, care for children, prepare meals and freeze for later, restock tissues, keep a list of cards, flowers, food delivered, offer companionship — just your presence can help.

Be yourself: Speak in a sensitive tone, not too chipper or too reverential.

Offer alternatives: Gently draw your friend into quiet outside activities. Rather than saying, “You need to get out,” try saying, “Would you meet me for breakfast?” Offer to accompany her to her first grief support group.

Bereavement Gift Ideas

- Journal notebook
- Live plants
- Pictures of the loved one
- Contributions to a special charity
- Comforting music or books
- Games or special items for children
- Restaurant gift certificate
- Long-distance calling card
- Gift certificate for pampering herself
- Plant a memorial tree
- A scrapbook for others to share their memories (have at home and reception)

DON'T

When in doubt, don’t say anything. Say as little as possible on early visits. Simply, “I’m so sorry” is often enough.

Never say things like: “I know how you feel.” “Well, at least you have other children.” “You can remarry.”

Avoid clichés: “At least they did not suffer.” “They lived a long time.” “You have the rest of your life in front of you.”

Don’t try to stop her from crying.

Don’t tell her what she needs to do. Let her mourn at her own pace.

Don’t enable her by doing too much for too long.

LESSONS LEARNED

If your ship/squadron/command is not involved: you may want to use a special call tree of mature spouses to help you make the calls to your command's spouses. Don't assume a service member will call. Often, the media identifies the ship/command incorrectly in its first report.

Be sure to **stay in contact with the Ombudsman.**

If one spouse is very close to the spouse involved but is not mentioned in the Emergency Data Form (EDF), you might want someone to notify them in person rather than by phone.

Prior to initial notification, discuss with others in your group what the procedures will be, what is and is not to be said, and how.

Brief other spouses on what support needs can be provided; i.e., transportation for visiting relatives/friends, phone calls, clean house, etc. Delegate duties. Others want and need to help. Volunteer coordinator needs to be assigned immediately.

Food: Designate someone to coordinate food for the families involved. Other commands will want to help, and they need to be able to call someone other than the CO's spouse. Don't assume family will call you for more food. Go take inventory and suggest or ask what they would like.

Phones: Offer to alternate people at the homes of the victims' families to answer the phone, even when family is there. Take messages and screen calls. Let the widow(er) decide with whom they wish to speak. Prank or strange calls should be expected.

Notebook: Keep a notebook to log phone calls, messages, visitors, flowers, arrival times, transportation arrangements, memorial service particulars, etc.

Family members get-together: This is good and should be done as soon as possible, especially if the command is gone.

- Try to have a knowledgeable person there to answer questions and dispel rumors: a representative from the Type Command, a doctor, a chaplain, and/or a person experienced in helping deal with emotions.
- Coordinate Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD) with Chaplains and/or Fleet and Family Support Center (FFSC).
- If you sense there is a lot of concern due to the circumstances of the accident or media attentions, you may hand out 3 x 5 cards and ask the members to anonymously write down comments, questions, fears, criticisms, etc., then let your expert(s) address these issues.

Possible questions:

- "How can my spouse safely fly again?"
- "Is the airplane/ship safe?"
- "Is it okay to talk with my spouse about my fears?"

Immediate calls:

- Ask widow(er) if visits from squadron/ship/command spouses are desired.
- If so, please do not bring your children unless specifically requested (relay this to all).
- A 10-15 minute call is usually adequate.

Calls after the memorial service:

- Calls may be made to widow(er) at their home or jointly at Commanding Officer's home or another home.
- Be sure to include enlisted spouses for the memorial services, as well as paying respects if they are friends of the spouse involved.

Later: Call to check on the widow(er) frequently and then as often as appropriate. The six month and one year anniversary are tough times in the grieving process.

LESSONS LEARNED FROM USS COLE

The following are key discussion points from the January 2001 Battle Group Commanders' Conference — a brief on the attack on the USS Cole. Conference presenters included:

Matthew M. Sharpe, Commanding Officer USS Donald Cook

Jeffery Scott Jones, Commanding Officer USS Hawes

Joy L. Johnson, Director, Management Support Services – CACO

Catherine M. Stokoe – Director, Navy Fleet and Family Support Centers of Hampton Roads

Paula Sydow – Education, Training, Deployment Support Services Supervisor, FFSC, Norfolk and FFSC Command Representative for USS Cole

Captain James P. Nickols – Force Chaplain to SURFLANT

During a working lunch following the briefs, there was a discussion of the role of the Battle Group Commander's spouse and the commanding officer's spouse/lead spouse- particularly prior to and during a crisis.

CO/XO Spouses in the BG Commands:

1. Every command should have a lead spouse identified. This is usually the CO or XO spouse; however, if there is no CO or XO spouse present, the commanding officer should officially appoint a spouse to serve in that position as quickly as possible. A command should not deploy without an officially identified spouse leader. The commanding officer should communicate his/her choice to the other families of the command, to the command ombudsmen, as well as to Battle Group Commander and the FFSC Command Representative. This is the person who will be contacted by the Battle Group Commander and/or his/her spouse during an emergency.
2. Encourage the CO spouse (or identified spouse leader) to learn the CACO procedures, and if possible, attend CACO training.
3. The spouse leader should personally contact the following key individuals — FFSC Director, lead Chaplain, local Red Cross director, Navy Marine Corps Relief Society director, lead CACO, and the command's FFSC Command Representative so he/she is familiar with these key individuals prior to any emergency. A relationship should be established well in advance of any problems.
4. Emergency contact forms — the command and the lead spouse should encourage all spouses to complete an emergency data form, and Page Two's should be updated and checked regularly for changes. (Many of the Page Two's on the Cole were not current, which made contacting family members much more difficult)
5. Emphasize the importance of advanced preparation.
6. Team work — for the Flag spouse who is the lead during a crisis it is important not to "go it alone". There is going to be more than enough work to go around and it is important to establish a team of peers who can help. No one is immune from the stress and fatigue a crisis causes — having a team assisting you offers you some protection from the draining effects of a crisis. Taking it a step further — it is important to know who your "go to" people are well in advance of any crisis.

For the lead spouse of a command such as a destroyer, the crisis team would generally consist of the following: CO spouse , XO spouse, Command Master Chief Spouse, Ombudsman — however the team is structured, it should meet regularly to go over the steps the CO has decided will be taken in event of an emergency.

CRISIS MANAGEMENT PHONE NUMBERS

COMMAND

Chief of Casualty Office _____

Regional Casualty Office _____

Command CACO _____

Command Chaplain _____

Public Affairs Office (PAO) _____

Command Ombudsman _____

Legal Officer _____

Fleet and Family Support Center (FFSC) _____

Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society _____

American Red Cross _____

EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE REFERENCE

This Information will only be used in the event of an emergency.

Spouse Information

Full Name _____ Nickname _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____

DOB ___/___/___ Phone (h) ___-___-___ (w) ___-___-___ (cell) ___-___-___

Employer _____ Phone ___-___-___

Address _____

I.D. Card expires ___/___/___ Last DEERS update ___/___/___

Service Member

Service member's name & Rate/Rank _____

Service member's Dept./Division _____ Service member's SSN ___-___-___ PRD ___/___

Children

Children's names * ATTN SC (* any condition requiring special attention/care)

1. _____ DOB ___/___/___ * ATTN SC?

School: _____ Phone: ___-___-___

I.D. Card expires ___/___/___ Last DEERS update ___/___/___

2. _____ DOB ___/___/___ * ATTN SC?

School: _____ Phone: ___-___-___

I.D. Card expires ___/___/___ Last DEERS update ___/___/___

3. _____ DOB ___/___/___ * ATTN SC?

School: _____ Phone: ___-___-___

I.D. Card expires ___/___/___ Last DEERS update ___/___/___

4. _____ DOB ___/___/___ * ATTN SC?

School: _____ Phone: ___-___-___

I.D. Card expires ___/___/___ Last DEERS update ___/___/___

5. _____ DOB ___/___/___ * ATTN SC?

School: _____ Phone: ___-___-___

I.D. Card expires ___/___/___ Last DEERS update ___/___/___

Emergency Contacts

In the event you need special care while your service member is deployed, who would you want us to contact to assist you?

Name _____ Relationship to you _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____

Phone (h) (____)-____-____ (w) (____)-____-____ (pager) (____)-____-____

Primary Care Provider Information

Full Name _____ Relationship to children _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____

DOB ___/___/___ Phone (h) ___-___-___ (w) ___-___-___ (pager) ___-___-___

When does the Primary Care Provider's POA expire? _____

When does the Primary Care Provider's Medical POA expire? _____

Does the Primary Care Provider have a military I.D. Card? _____ When does it expire ___/___/___

In the event the Primary Care Provider is incapacitated, while you are deployed who has LEGAL AUTHORIZATION to care for the children until the SECONDARY care provider arrives?

Name _____ Relationship to children _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____

Phone (h) (____)-____-____ (w) (____)-____-____ (pager) (____)-____-____

Do they have Power of Attorney? _____ When does the POA expire? _____

Do they have Medical Power of Attorney? _____ When does the Medical POA expire? _____

Secondary Care Provider Information

In the event the Secondary Care Provider is incapacitated, while you are deployed who has LEGAL AUTHORIZATION to care for the children?

Full Name _____ Relationship to children _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____

DOB ___/___/___ Phone (h) ___-___-___ (w) ___-___-___ (pager) ___-___-___

When does the Secondary Care Provider's POA expire? _____

When does the Secondary Care Provider's Medical POA expire? _____

Does the Secondary Care Provider have a military I.D. Card? _____
When does it expire ___/___/___

Additional Contacts & Instructions

Are there family members you would want contacted if your care providers were incapacitated?

Name _____ Relationship to children _____

Phone (h) (____)-____-____ (w) (____)-____-____ (pager) (____)-____-____

Name _____ Relationship to children _____

Phone (h) (____)-____-____ (w) (____)-____-____ (pager) (____)-____-____

Would you want a Navy Chaplain called? _____ Personal religious preference, if any? _____

Do you have a personal physician you would want called? _____ Name _____

Phone (h) (____)-____-____ (w) (____)-____-____ (pager) (____)-____-____

Please write out any special instructions or concerns that you would want us to be aware of, in the event this information sheet must be used (i.e., court orders, physical or emotional concerns, medical conditions...)

RESOURCES FOR CRISIS SITUATIONS

International Critical Incident Stress Foundation, Inc.
10176 Baltimore National Pike, Unit 201
Ellicott City, MD 21042
Routine: 410-750-9600
FAX: 410-750-9601
Website: <http://www.erols.com/icisf>
EMERGENCY: 410-313-CISD (410-313-2473)

Useful Links

Navy Marine Corp Relief Society

alexande@hq.nmcrs.org

After a Disaster: Steps You Can Take to Cope with a Stressful Situation

<http://www.wright.edu/sopp/cps/TraumaticStress.html>

American Red Cross

<http://www.redcross.org>

The Child Survivor of Traumatic Stress

<http://users.umassmed.edu/Kenneth.Fletcher/kidsurv.html>

Federal Emergency Management Agency

<http://www.fema.gov/kids/terrorism.htm>

Helping Children After a Disaster: Facts for Families from the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

<http://www.aacap.org/>

International School Psychology Association

<http://www.ispaweb.org>

Managing Traumatic Stress, American Psychological Association

<http://www.apa.org>

Mister Rogers

<http://www.misterrogers.org/families>

National Association for the Education of Young Children

<http://www.naeyc.org>

NASP National Emergency Assistance Team

<http://www.nasponline.org/neat>

National Center for PTSD

<http://www.ncptsd.org/>

National Organization for Victim Assistance

<http://www.try-nova.org>

PrepareRespondRecover.com

<http://www.PrepareRespondRecover.com/childrensneeds/>

Psychological First Aid Kit (from George Mason University)
<http://www.gmu.edu/departments/psychology>

Purdue Extension — Knowledge to Go
<http://www.ces.purdue.edu>

Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors
<http://www.taps.org>

U.S. Government
<http://firstgov.gov>
Type in “crisis”, “trauma”, or a similar title

Lifelines (tragedy support links)
www.lifelines2000.org

TAPS
<http://taps.org>

Tricare
<http://tricare.osd.mil>